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XXI. *Observations on a Viper found in Cranborne Chace, Dorsetshire.* By the Rev. Thomas Rackett, F.R.S. & L.S.

Read April 15, 1817.

THE Viper which accompanies this paper does not appear to have been noticed by any British naturalist. It is probably *Coluber Chersea* of Linnæus.

*Coluber Chersea.* Linn. *Syst. Nat.* i. 377. 184. Gmel. iii. p. 1091. *Fn. Suec.* 285. *Act. Stock.* 1749. p. 246. t. 6. fig. 1. 2. Laur. *Reptil.* p. 97. n. 214. Weigel in *Abh. der Hall. Naturf. Ges.* i. p. 12.

“*Habitat* in Sueciæ præsertim Smolandiaë, Scaniaë, Uplandiaë, coryletis et fruticosis depressis, etiam in Pomeraniaë dumetis.

“Bero satis affinis, et citius funesta nisi pars morsa statim reseretur. 9½ poll. longus.

“Bero minor, color obscurius spadiceus, caput ovatum, truncus teres.”

Linnæus has described this species in the *Swedish Transactions* for the year 1749, and has given a figure which nearly resembles our specimen. The heart-shaped spot on the head is apparent. The belly is quite plain, and has not the appearance of steel observable in the common viper. Linnæus lays great stress on a dark spot near the extremity of the tail, as a distinguishing character of the species: this mark is very evident in the one under examination.

I received the viper from the Rev. John Tregonwell Napier, Rector of Chettle in Dorsetshire, who killed it in Cranborne Chace. It is extremely rare, but known to the gamekeepers under the name of "THE RED VIPER." A mutilated specimen sent to me last year, was when recent of a bright red colour inclining to orange. The bite is much more venomous than that of the common viper; as I have been assured that a dog which had been bitten by a red viper, expired before he had reached the extremity of a down in his way home.